



General Services Administration
Office of Congressional and
Intergovernmental Affairs
Washington, DC 20405

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

November 1, 1995

Mr. William F. Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222
Washington, D.C. 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Subject: Toll Free Service Access Codes,
CC Docket No. 95-155.

Dear Mr. Caton:

Enclosed please find the original and nine copies of the General Services Administration's Comments for filing in the above-referenced proceeding.

Sincerely,

Jody B. Burton
Assistant General Counsel
Personal Property Division

Enclosures

cc: International Transcription Service, Inc.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Toll Free Service Access Codes

CC Docket No. 95-155

COMMENTS OF THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

JODY B. BURTON
Assistant General Counsel
Personal Property Division

GENERAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION
18th & F Streets, N.W., Room 4002
Washington, D.C. 20405

November 1, 1995

**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)
)
)

Toll Free Service Access Codes)
)
)

CC Docket No. 95-155

**COMMENTS OF THE
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

The General Services Administration ("GSA"), on behalf of the Federal Executive Agencies, submits these Comments in response to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM"), FCC 95-419, released October 5, 1995. In this NPRM, the Commission requested comments and replies on various proposals concerning toll free access codes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Section 111(a) (1) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended 40 U.S.C. 759 (a) (1), GSA is vested with the responsibility to coordinate and provide for the procurement of telecommunications services for Federal Executive Agencies ("FEAs"). That Act also allows GSA to delegate responsibility for the procurement of services to individual agencies when there are good reasons for such delegation (40 U.S.C. 759 (b) (3)).

GSA is thus directly or indirectly one of the largest users of telecommunications services in the nation. In particular, GSA has procured numerous toll free ("800") numbers, and thousands of associated lines, for the use of the FEAs, and is thus vitally interested in an efficient and equitable implementation of the new toll free access code ("888").

GSA commends the Commission for its proposals to assure that the transition to the 888 code goes smoothly. In these Comments, GSA addresses two aspects of this transition that are of particular concern to the FEAs.

**II. Current Holders of 800 Numbers Should
Be Granted A Right of First Refusal.**

The Commission invites comments on whether the current holders of 800 numbers should be granted a right of first refusal which, if exercised, would bar the assignment of equivalent 888 numbers to other users.¹ The Commission also asks whether subscribers should be required to pay a fee to exercise this right.²

As the Commission recognizes, vanity toll free numbers, such as "1-800-FLOWERS," may have great value to the holder.³ Some holders have invested substantial resources in advertising their 800 numbers and establishing their identity. Indeed, some 800 numbers procured by the GSA effectively perform a public service by

¹ NPRM, para 44.

² Id.

³ Id., para. 35.

virtue of their ease of recognition, for example:

1-800-TAX-1040

1-800-ATF-GUNS

1-800-CALL-HUD

For these reasons, GSA believes that all holders of 800 numbers should be given a right of first refusal, free of charge, over the assignment of their equivalent 888 numbers.

There should, however, be appropriate charges levied for the exercise of this right. Users who wish to activate their 888 equivalents should pay a monthly recurring rate. Users who wish to merely block the assignment of their 888 equivalents should pay a relatively nominal annual rate to encourage them to reevaluate their need to block their 888 equivalents each year in light of changing circumstances.

III. Equivalents to High Volume Numbers Should Not Be Immediately Assigned.

As the Commission recognizes, until the public becomes familiar with 888 as a second toll free access code, it is likely that there will be a large quantity of misdialed numbers.⁴ Each misdialed number creates a cost for the reached party and a possible loss of business for the party the caller was trying to reach.

To some extent, these adverse consequences are unavoidable. The Commission can take two actions, however, which will tend to ameliorate the problem of misdialed numbers.

⁴ NPRM, para. 47.

First, the Commission should require that the 888 equivalent of high volume 800 numbers not be assigned until the public has grown accustomed to multiple toll free access codes. This will require the flagging of high volume 800 numbers, and the blocking of matching 888 numbers until those 888 numbers are needed to meet demand.

Second, an attempt should be made to prevent new high volume users from being assigned 888 numbers, which would result in misdials to existing 800 equivalents. Whenever possible, new high volume users should be assigned 800 numbers that become available through normal turnover. These new high volume 800 numbers would be flagged and their 888 equivalents, if unassigned, would be left unassigned until they are needed to meet demand.

These simple steps will not eliminate the cost and inconvenience of transitional misdialings, but should limit their occurrence significantly.

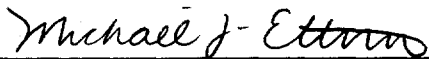
IV. CONCLUSION

As the agency vested with the responsibility for acquiring telecommunications services on a competitive basis for use of the Federal Executive Agencies, GSA urges the Commission to provide current holders of 800 numbers a right of first refusal of equivalent 888 numbers and to establish procedures as described herein to limit the adverse impact of misdialed numbers.


Respectfully submitted,

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November 1, 1995

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I Jody B. BURTON do hereby certify that copies of the foregoing
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November, 1995, by hand delivery or postage paid to the following parties:

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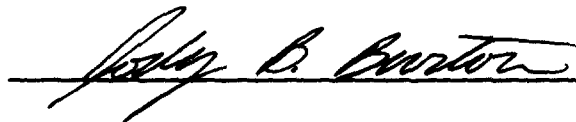
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard B. Lee", is written over a horizontal line.